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BOND STREET
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
TORONTO.

RESOLUTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE;

WITH

APPLICATION FOR RE-ADMISSION TO THE CONGREGATIONAL
UNION OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

AT ITS MEETING IN

ZION CHURCH, TORONTO, JUNE 8th, 1881.

TORONTO

MENGOUGH BROTHERS, PRINTERS, ADELAIDE STREET EAST.
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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
BOSTON
1900

Bond Street Congregational Church,

TORONTO.

*To the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec
in meeting assembled in Zion Congregational Church,
Toronto, June 8th, 1881.*

DEAR BRETHREN :

The Deacons of Bond Street Church, believing that it will be helpful to you in the formation of a correct judgment in the consideration of the application of the church for re-admission to the fellowship of the Union, have resolved upon printing the following resolutions and correspondence, together with the application itself, and the three recommendations required by rule.

On behalf of the deacons,

THOS. ELGAR, Sec.

1st, Resolution passed at a church meeting held Aug. 4th, 1880:—"That every effort be made for a renewal of fellowship and co-operation with churches of all other protestant denominations, and especially with those of our own faith and order, in all Christian work and enterprise."

"That a communication be addressed to Zion, the Northern, Western and Yorkville churches, inviting the pastors, deacons, and such other members as these churches may appoint to a

mutual conference with the male members of this church on as early a date as possible."

Negotiations connected with the call to the Rev. Dr. Wild, and his acceptance thereof caused considerable delay in following the instructions conveyed in these resolutions. Of this the churches referred to were duly informed by the Executive Committee of the church under date of September 27th.

On October 30th an invitation was sent addressed to the Revs. J. Burton, H. D. Powis, J. B. Silcox and W. H. Warriner, reading thus:—

TORONTO, October 30th, 1880.

DEAR SIR,

In furtherance of the resolution of the Bond Street Church, a copy of which was forwarded to you on the 27th ult., the Executive Committee have much pleasure in inviting yourself and the officers of the church to a meeting to be held in the Bond Street Sabbath School on Tuesday evening, the 23rd prox. at 8 o'clock. We trust that, with the Divine help and guidance, this mutual conference may be productive of the happiest results, by cementing and binding together in Christian fellowship and labour all the churches of our denomination in this city, and that the cause of the Master may be strengthened amongst us, and His name be glorified.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

W. McCARTNEY, Sec.

The conference met in regular course on the evening of November 23rd, and adjourned for three weeks in order that the Bond Street Church might, in accordance with suggestions of the brethren, make some expression of regret with reference to the late pastorate.

On December 8th the church held an adjourned meeting at which the following resolution was passed on the recommendation of the Executive Committee:—

"Resolved, That we, the members of the Bond street Congregational church, desire to express our deep regret that the results which have followed upon the call and settlement of our late pastor have been of so unhappy a nature.

"While we cannot admit that in giving that call, or in our subsequent action, we were actuated by any motive other than that of seeking and securing the best interests of the church, we see in the results the evidence that we were unfortunate in our

action, and have accordingly taken those steps which we deemed right and proper, and have erased the name of T. W. Handford from the church roll.

"We further desire to give expression to our regret that a reproach should have fallen upon the cause of Christ, and especially upon the churches of our own denomination, in consequence of the late course of events at Bond street, but we hope and believe that our Lord and Master, "Whose we are and Whom we serve," is guiding and leading us in the present, and that the future of our church will be a happier, a brighter, and a more successful one.

"It is therefore our desire to be in bonds of fellowship and union with all God's people.

"The church rejoices in the settlement of Dr. Joseph Wild in the pastorate, and pledges itself to hearty labour with him in the extension of the Gospel of our common Lord."

It was further resolved that a copy of this resolution should be sent to each of the Congregational Churches in the city and Yorkville.

The church had during these negotiations elected a new deaconate, and it was with surprise that they received the following note from a "conference" of the holding of which they had no cognizance, and at which there was no representation from Bond Street Church.

TORONTO, Ont., December 23rd, 1880.

W. McCARTNEY, ESQ.,

Secretary Bond Street Congregational Church, Toronto.

DEAR SIR,—At a conference of the Pastors and Deacons of Zion Church, the Northern, Western, and Yorkville churches, held this evening, the Resolution of the Bond Street Church dated Dec. 8th, 1880, was laid before them.

As Secretary of the meeting I was instructed to acknowledge the receipt of the Resolution, which will be laid before the several churches at their next regular monthly church meeting.

I am, dear sir,

Yours very faithfully,

J. C. COPP,
Secretary.

At this conference, it will be observed, judgment was passed upon the church as the subjoined account of the proceedings will show.

A united meeting of the pastors and deacons of the churches thus addressed met on December 23rd at the residence of Rev. H. D. Powis to unitedly consider the above resolutions. It was agreed to submit to the respective churches the following:—

“A careful consideration of the resolutions passed at the meeting of the Bond Street church on the 8th of December, 1880, leads to the conclusion that the said resolutions are not fitted to restore the confidence which has been broken, seeing that regret for the ‘results’ is mentioned, but any expression of regret for the actions which necessarily led to those results appears to have been studiously avoided.”

“We desire to say that, recognizing the right of a church to regulate its affairs, whatever individual opinion may be, we would not have made the unhappy events which have occurred in connection with the church in Bond street the present subject of church action, had not that church requested our pastor and office-bearers to meet with them in formal conference, and subsequently have laid these resolutions before us; it is therefore forced upon us to allude to those actions by which the Bond street church placed itself outside the Congregational Union and of the fellowship of their sister churches, and to that constant justification of the course which perpetuates the alienation.

“We believe the Bond street church to have acted not only ‘unfortunately,’ but unwisely even to wrong-doing, in forming a connection with their late pastor, with his known antecedents, and the peculiar relation in which he stood to the denomination to which he belonged when the call was given to him; we also believe that the action of the majority towards a large and worthy minority, who protested against the induction of the late pastor, and were in consequence of that induction obliged to withdraw from the church, was unkind; that the persistency of the church in retaining Mr. Handford in spite of reports which had become matters of public notoriety, even to their finding their way into the public press, was at least most strange; we also think that the action of the Bond street church in refusing to meet with the committee appointed by the Union was wrong and uncourteous, calculated at once to destroy all fellowship, and we believe that the results which have been so injurious not only to the Congregational body in Canada, but also to the Christian churches of Toronto, and which the resolutions deplore, have been the inevitable results of the unwise and unkind action above referred to, and that, therefore, the separation which exists between that

church and other churches of the denomination (in which the Bond street church was once one of the most honoured and useful members) has been solely occasioned by that churches' determined action.

"We consider that the Bond street church should not only express regret for the sad results, but frankly acknowledge regret for their erroneous conduct, and this in simple justice to themselves, to the minority who were driven from amongst them, and to the Christian public generally.

"In our judgment, therefore, it is the Bond street church alone that can place itself in true fellowship with the Christian community and with the once sister churches, and until this is done we are constrained to say that a mere formal fellowship would be worthless to them and unworthy of those who tendered it.

"We unhesitatingly say that we desire the true prosperity of the Bond street church, that these utterances are made in no unfriendly or critical spirit, but being called upon by that church to take action we find it incumbent upon us to take and maintain such a position as will honestly show our views in regard to those unhappy events that have so troubled and disturbed our denomination in this city and province."

The Bond street brethren felt that had each church been left to its own course, passing its own uninfluenced judgment, it would have been strictly in accord with congregational usage, and a more kindly and sympathetic feeling would have been engendered.

The churches met and acted upon the Conference judgment, with the following results:—

The Northern and Yorkville churches at their regular church meetings on December 29th, adopted these last resolutions *simpliciter*; the Yorkville church adding their readiness to grant fellowship when the conditions were fulfilled; the Northern appointing the pastor with Messrs. Baird and Nasmith to convey the resolutions to the Bond street church; then continued the consideration to an adjourned church meeting on the 5th inst., and adopted the same, simply adding to the last paragraph so as to read, "we desire the *restoration* and true prosperity," &c.

From the Western Congregational church the following letter was received:—

To the Bond Street Congegational Church:

"DEAR BRETHREN.—The resolutions submitted by you, having reference to a renewal of fellowship with other churches

of our faith and order, were read before this church, and the following resolution was passed in reference thereto:—

“That as there has never been any rupture in our fellowship with the Bond street church in the past, we do not feel ourselves called upon to take further action in this matter than to assure them that as we have sympathized with them in their troubles heretofore, so we hope in the future always to extend to them our cordial fellowship and good will.

“By order of the church, at its meeting, January 12th, 1881.

“D. LANGFORD GRAHAM,

“Secretary.”

It will be observed that the Northern church appointed a deputation to convey its resolutions (those passed by the conference) to the Bond street church, but they were sent by mail, and moreover it had been agreed upon by the pastor and deacons of Bond street church that no notice could be taken of the conference referred to, and that as the Northern church had adopted its resolutions *simpliciter*, it would not be wise to receive the brethren appointed. Had not the action of the church been forwarded by mail, the result might have been otherwise.

The Bond street church proceeded further as here detailed:

On the 26th January, at the annual meeting of the Bond street church, the resolutions were taken in consideration, and the new deacon's Board submitted the subjoined reply, which was adopted unanimously:—

“That in review of the recent action of the churches of our faith and order in this city in response to the efforts of this church towards a renewal of fellowship, be it hereby resolved:—

“1. That to the Western Church and its late pastor, the Rev. J. B. Silcox, we beg to express our high appreciation of the Christian sympathy and fellowship extended at a time and under circumstances when such sympathy and fellowship were most needed, and for the renewed expression of its confidence so recently tendered. The Church assures their brethren of its hearty reciprocation, and pledges itself to earnest co-operation with them in every good word and work. It gladly avails itself of the opportunity thus afforded to further assure the Western fellowship of its hope and prayer that an under shepherd may ere long be settled over them in the gospel who shall worthily succeed their late esteemed pastor.

“2. In response to a resolution of a conference adopted by the Northern, Zion, and Yorkville churches, this church records its opinions that the proceedings of the said conference were

uncongregational, inasmuch as definite action was taken, which action should have been left to the respective churches referred to.

"3. That the church emphatically repudiates the suggestion of 'wrong doing' conveyed in the resolution, and considers the imputation as unworthy of a body of Christian brethren, themselves subject to error and mistake.

"4. With regard to the withdrawal of the church from the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, the church regrets that the conference alluded to felt itself called upon to pass judgment. This is a subject entirely between the church and the Union, and will be considered at the proper time and place. In the meanwhile, the church would place on record that no discourtesy whatever was shown towards the committee of the Union appointed to confer with it, but the very reverse, as the following correspondence will prove:—

LETTER FROM DR. WILKES, DATED HAMILTON,
JUNE 21ST, 1881.

"To the Secretary of the Bond Street Church:

"DEAR SIR,—Your communication from the Bond street Church, withdrawing from the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, was in accordance with rule referred to the Membership Committee, which, after due consideration, reported a resolution as follows:—*Resolved*, that the letter of Bond street Congregational Church, Toronto, be laid upon the table meanwhile, and that a committee be appointed to confer with the Church and report thereon to the Union as soon as possible, because it is due to a church that has held the position which this church has for so long a time to make all reasonable efforts to retain it in the Union; said committee to consist of the chairman of the Union, the Revs. R. K. Black, Dr. Wilkes, Dr. Cornish, and K. M. Fenwick.

"Prior to leaving London this committee met, and appointing me convener requested me to address you as secretary of the church stating our appointment, and that as it would not be possible for us within any reasonable time to confer with the church otherwise than by written correspondence, we should feel obliged by any communication from the church to us which they may deem it proper to make in view of the design mentioned in the resolution. I return to Montreal probably next week, and may be addressed there at any time.

"Yours very truly,

"HENRY WILKES."

The following letter was sent in reply:—

"BOND STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
"TORONTO, August 9th, 1878.

"*The Rev. Henry Wilkes, D.D., L.L.D.* :

"DEAR SIR,—Your letter of 21st June came duly to hand and was read to the church at its last church meeting on July 31st. The church instructed its officers to address a letter to you as convener of the committee appointed by the Union at London in June last, to the following effect.—First of all the church begs to express its full appreciation of the kindness that led to the appointment of that committee, at the same time the church begs to assure the committee that it was in no spirit of childish irritation that it resolved to withdraw from the Union. It was not a pleasant task to sever associations that had been cherished for more than a quarter of a century. But the church was compelled by self respect and urged by the reasons already assigned to break away. The church did not desire to compromise the Union nor any of its members, nor did it desire to be the occasion of strife, but it did desire for itself, that it might be permitted to perform undisturbed the work the Master assigned it. The church quite clearly understands that severance from the Union is not severance from the denomination.

"The Year Book for 1873-4 says, p. 14, that 'It is not necessary to the good and regular standing of a minister or church to be connected with the Union.' This church came to its decision deliberately and prayerfully, and if it had ever entertained a doubt of the wisdom of its course, the July issue of the denominational organ would have settled that doubt.

"While the Church maintains as warmly its attachment to the denomination, and desires to serve to its uttermost the cause of Congregationalism in Canada, it is fully and unanimously of the opinion that withdrawal from the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec is its only honourable course.

"(Signed) Thomas W. Handford, pastor; James Fraser, James Thomson, Edward Beckett, James Farquhar, Francis Robinson, deacons."

"5. While desiring fellowship with all Evangelical churches of its own and other denominations, this church resolves that under no consideration will it revive the discussion of those unhappy mistakes into which it fell, and *for which it expresses its sorrow and regret*. Such a course will, it is believed, soonest allay differences that necessarily exist with respect thereto.

"6. While forgetting the things that are behind, we desire to press forward in the spirit of the Gospel, which invariably cherishes "peace and good will" towards all; and may the Divine Head of the Church ever be our strength, and use us as a people for the furtherance of His Kingdom in the hearts of men.

Signed by order of the church,

THOMAS ELGAR.

To these resolutions the replies sent were as follows:—

NORTHERN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.
TORONTO, February 10th 1881.

THOS. ELGAR, ESQ.

Secretary Bond Street Congregational Church, Toronto.

DEAR SIR,—At our adjourned church meeting held last evening, the Resolutions of the Bond Street Church dated Jany. 27th, were read, and received by the church. And on motion, ordered to be placed on file.

I am, dear sir,

Yours fraternally,

C. A. HODGETTS,

Secy. N. C. C.

ZION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.
TORONTO, February 2nd, 1881.

DEAR SIR,—Your communication of the 27th ultimo, containing a copy of Resolutions, passed at the Annual Meeting of Bond Street Congregational Church on the 26th ultimo was laid before the regular Monthly Meeting of Zion Church held on the date hereof and was duly received, ordered to be entered in the minutes, and courteously acknowledged by the secretary.

Yours Sincerely,

To THOS. ELGAR, ESQ.

W. FREELAND

Secy. Bond St. Church,

Church Secy.

Toronto.

A similar acknowledgement was received from Yorkville church, but this was supplemented by the following letter:

YORKVILLE, March 10th 1881.

THOS. ELGAR, ESQ.

Secretary Bond Street Church.

DEAR SIR,—The Yorkville Congregational Church being in-

formed that the Bond Street Church anticipated some further action in regard to their resolutions held a special meeting last night to consider the matter, when the following resolution was passed unanimously, and I was instructed to forward a copy of it to you.

Yours faithfully,

W. H. WARRINER

Pastor Y. C. Church.

COPY OF RESOLUTION.

" That the Yorkville Congregational Church having considered the resolutions of the Bond Street Church, the receipt of which has been already acknowledged, believes no immediate action thereupon, beyond courteously expressing good will and kindly feeling towards the brethren in Bond Street is necessary, more especially as the time for the meeting of the 'Congregational Union' is now sooner at hand.

" The Yorkville Church understands that Bond Street proposes seeking re-admittance into the Union, and when their application is before that body no doubt the various points contained in their resolutions will be deliberated upon by the representatives of the various congregational churches assembled. Under these circumstances the Yorkville Church considers that the preferable course will be to allow the whole matter to rest in abeyance until June next, when they will be prepared to approach the subject in conjunction with their brethren of the sister churches in a fair and impartial spirit."

And now brethren, members of the Union, we present our case before you in the following application for re-admission to your fellowship, the terms of which were agreed upon by the deacons unanimously, and subsequently passed by the church.

Having felt the desire for advice and Christian conference with those who are the acknowledged leaders of Congregationalism in Canada, a copy of the membership roll was sent to the Venerable Dr. Wilkes, of Montreal, with the express desire of the deacons that he should take into his confidence the following esteemed brethren:—Dr. Cornish, Prof. K. M. Fenwick, Rev. J. F. Stevenson, L.L.B., Rev. J. L. Foster, with Messrs. Geo. Hague and Henry Lyman.

The application reads :

The Bond Street Congregational Church, Toronto, to the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec:

DEAR BRETHREN,

We believe that the time has now come for a renewal of our interest in the various organizations of the denomination, and for co-operation with you in the promulgation of those principles of freedom in matters of Church government and discipline to which as a body we adhere.

You will agree with us that this will be best accomplished by our return to membership with your Union, and we accordingly make application for re-admission thereto at the ensuing meeting to be held in Zion Church, in this city on the 8th June next.

We feel that in submitting this application it is alike due to ourselves, and to the churches of our faith and order generally, that we should again express our sorrow and regret for the mistake we made in extending a call to the late pastor of the church.

The deplorable effects of the extension of that call upon the church at large we now realize, and earnestly desire that the matter may from this time forth be considered as for ever closed.

Accompanying this application is one from the Rev. Joseph Wild, D.D., our esteemed pastor, and the hope of the church is, that both may be received to your fellowship together, and that henceforth nothing may occur to disturb the peace and prosperity of the churches.

On behalf of the church,

Signed,

JOSEPH WILD, Pastor.

FRANCIS ROBINSON,	}	Deacons.
GEO. VIRTUE,		
THOS. ELGAR,		
WILLIAM ST. CROIX,		
ED. BECKETT,		
W. MCCARTNEY,		
R. DUNLOP.		

THOS. ELGAR, Secretary.

TORONTO, May 30th, 1881.

The following are the three letters in support of this application, required by rule of the Union:—

MONTREAL, 4th May, 1881.

Secretary Bond Street Church:

MY DEAR SIR,—I have read your application for re-admission into the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and

consider that the acknowledgement of serious mistake in the matter of calling to the pastorate one who was under a cloud, thinking him penitent and reformed, and the expression of deep sorrow and regret for all the sad results of such mistake, are amply sufficient to place you in a true position before the brethren in regard to this matter. Again, I have carefully examined the roll of membership of the church with the notes of the deacons appended, (including the appended names with whom it is proposed at once to take proper action) and have arrived at the conclusion that the Bond Street Church is worthy of the confidence of the sister churches in respect of its membership and discipline.

Further, I think it of no little importance that the Bond Street Church, around which there are so many pleasant memories, and which has been aforetime distinguished for usefulness in the denomination to which it belongs, should again take its place in the sisterhood of churches. Animated by its former principles and spirit it can do much for the advancement of Our Lord's Kingdom, and I think there is good ground to hope that it will be so animated now and in the future.

I therefore cordially recommend the application it makes for re-admission into the Union.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY WILKES.

PARIS, Ont., May 9th, 1881.

To the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec:

Understanding that the Bond Street Congregational Church, who withdrew from the Union a few years ago is about to apply for a renewal of membership, I feel pleasure in cordially commending her to the Union as a Church of Christ whom we shall be glad to have in more formal connection with us. I recommend her the more cheerfully because she voluntarily withdrew from us, and now as voluntarily applies for a renewal of her fellowship.

Whatever in the past of her course has been erroneous, and has exposed her to private criticism from individuals, she has never been under any formal charge of having departed from the faith of the gospel. She has been grievously betrayed by one whom she trusted, and weakened by trusting too long. She has now put away her betrayer and is earnestly working for our common Saviour. We trust she may be heartily welcomed to the Union and that her admission may be for the mutual benefit of all the churches.

Yours &c.

W. H. ALLWORTH.

WINNIPEG, Man., May 16th 1881.

The Secretary Bond Street Congregational Church, Toronto.

DEAR SIR,—It was with great pleasure that I learned that Bond Street Congregational Church had resolved to make application for membership to the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec. With fullest confidence in the church, and in the character of its pastor, officers and membership I most heartily recommend the churches' application.

I am persuaded that the return of Bond Street Church to its sister churches will be to the mutual benefit of both the church and the associated churches, and I trust and will pray that both, forgetting the things that are behind will press forward in the service of the King with renewed consecration and redoubled zeal, and may we individually and unitedly receive that baptism of the spirit of peace and of power that will make us mighty in resisting evil and strong in advancing the Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness in the earth. "For my brethren and companion's sake I will now say, peace be within thee; because of the house of the Lord Our God I will seek thy good."

Yours &c.

J. B. SILCOX.

Messrs. Jas. Farquhar, Francis Robinson and Thos. Elgar have been duly appointed by the church to answer any questions, or make any explanations that the Union or Membership Committee may require.

The whole respectfully submitted by order of the Board of Deacons.

THOMAS ELGAR, Secretary.

BOND STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
TORONTO, May 30th, 1881.